

# ROCHESTER HISTORY

Edited by BLAKE McKELVEY, *City Historian*

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## A Rochester Bookshelf

By BLAKE McKELVEY

As this issue completes the tenth volume of *Rochester History*, it seems appropriate to celebrate the occasion with a survey of some "good reading" already available on Rochester. The past ten years have brought a considerable addition to the literature dealing more or less directly with the city. We have frequently resisted a temptation to comment on new publications of special merit, such as Professor Slater's excellent biography of Rush Rhees, for our little quarterly is scarcely adapted to review purposes, but a summary account of the entire field, indicating the books best suited for a general reader's bookshelf on Rochester, does now seem to be in order.

Good reading can of course be defined in various ways. Few, if any, of the books on Rochester satisfy all the exacting standards required of literary masterpieces, and yet a number of these volumes are very good reading indeed, as any will agree who have dipped into Algernon Crapsey's *Last of the Heretics* or Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro*, to mention only two. However, readers of local history—and in most special fields for that matter—readily recognize as "good reading" much writing which, despite some literary deficiencies, presents lively material on a subject close to the reader's interest. It is this standard which will guide our selection of books on Rochester.

There are more of them than you may suppose. Even this writer, after twelve years of research in the field, has been agreeably surprised by the volume and the quality of this literature when it is all assembled. A simple bibliographical list of all printed materials on the city would more than fill this issue, but that is not our purpose. We will risk the

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omission of many titles of pamphlets and other ephemera ( which the interested scholar can consult in the files of the Local History Division of the Rochester Public Library or at the University of Rochester Library) and confine our attention to those books and articles which seem more likely to interest the general Rochester reader who is curious about his community.

More than a hundred titles invite comment, for Rochester has provided stimulus to writers in many fields. Even the poets have not overlooked the city, but their contributions will be reserved for special treatment later, except to note in passing that the Flower City was one of the first communities in the country to have a song book of its own.\* Novelists have not been so attentive to the possibilities of Rochester subjects as to those of neighboring villages and cities; fortunately, however, many of the books inspired by upstate New York themes contain incidental passages on the city. With the exception of the historians, the biographers have been most prolific; perhaps the best writing—at least the most vivid—appears in a number of autobiographies, though many of this same group lack the creative spark. Institutional histories and journalistic commentaries are numerous and a few of them display sociological insight. No Rochester book has stood on the best-seller lists for long, but the local reader will be both entertained and instructed if he accepts our invitation to browse in what might more accurately be described as a Rochester bookcase.

### Rochester in Fiction

Perhaps no town has ever enjoyed having its picture taken by a novelist. Unflattering details always seem to stand out, offending sensitive sons and daughters. Fortunately, the passing years have a mellowing effect, and long before the grandchildren began to call for old-time stories, the once-scorned fictional accounts are dusted off and reread with unstinted amusement over the foibles and indiscretions of the past. In due time the novelist's residence is hunted up, appropriately marked, perhaps even converted into a local shrine.

\*(Kendrick P. Shedd, Ed.) *Rochester Song Book* (Rochester, 1910). Twenty-six of these songs, by Professor Shedd, Thomas Swinburne, Edward R. Foreman and others salute the city; most of the remainder, the Genesee Valley. The only song of this collection still popular today is Professor Slater's Commencement Hymn

Although Rochester itself has no literary shrine, principally because no novelist has yet done a very good job on the town, most of the fiction writers of the Genesee Country have experienced some of these reactions. Bellamy Partridge is now the "lion" of Phelps, although that home town of *The Country Lawyer* (1939) did not at first appreciate its honor. Palmyra was uncertain for a time about Samuel Hopkins Adams and his *Canal Town* (1944); antiquarians throughout the valley were critical of Carl Carmer's *Genesee Fever* (1941), and many cries of indignation rose from up-state readers when his *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, a jaunty treatment of the area's folklore, made its appearance in 1936. Yet all of these books are now in constant demand at the libraries, apparently giving present-day readers much pleasure.

Rochester has figured only incidentally in these regional books, not enough to take great interest or offense (except for the few pages devoted by Carmer to the city's "quest for mediocrity" in his *Listen for a Lonesome Drum*, pp. 37-42, which did create quite a stir). Both *Chad Hanna* (1940), by Walter Edmonds whose principal locale is the Mohawk, and *Banner by the Wayside* (1947), by Samuel Hopkins Adams, used Rochester as the setting for part of the action of their itinerant showmen; but again the community was not really involved. Adams, the son of Myron G. Adams, one of Rochester's most famous ministers, grew up in our midst and might well be called back to do a portrait of his home town, although that is scarcely the way to evoke a first-rate novel.

Several other books of fiction share a similar regional interest. Harvey Chalmers' *West to the Setting Sun* (1943), a fictionalized biography of Joseph Brant, tells the story of Indian movements leading up through the Revolution with slightly more attention to this area than was given by Harold Frederick in his fine pioneer work in that field, *In the Valley [of the Mohawk]* (1890). Charles Brutcher tells with little skill the thrilling adventures of *Joshua: A Man of the Finger Lakes Region* (1927) who risked his life to track down a western New York confederate of the Loomis Gang of horse thieves.

Three recent novels afford interesting views of the life of neighboring communities. Warren H. Smith's *The Misses Elliot of Geneva* (1940) portrays with delightful candor the life and *bons mots* of a number of aging gentlewomen in that proud center, rich in local heritage, as Smith's historical volume, *An Elegant but Salubrious Village* (1931), likewise demonstrates. Less urbane and amusing but more

gripping are *The Chapin Sisters* (1945) by Fynette Rowe, and *A Sweep of Dusk* (1945) by William Kehoe, both of which received an Avery Hopwood Award at Michigan University. The first shows the Chapin sisters of Bloomfield (more probably Canandaigua) repressed and blighted by their own family traditions throughout long careers in the horse-and-buggy days. The second story, set in an imaginary Graceville (which might be Auburn, or at times, Rochester) and at Ames (Cornell?) College, tells how the sensitive and creative spirits of a family of the 1930's were in their turn repressed and blighted by the environment. None of these books has quite the charm or lucid veracity to be found in the 1913 edition of the delightful diaries of Caroline Cowles Richards of Canandaigua, *Village Life in America: 1852-1872*.

The Erie Canal has inspired numerous stories. One of the first books, published by H. P. Marsh in 1914, *Rochester, and Its Early Canal Days*, has a reminiscent quality which offsets many literary imperfections and makes a useful source for later writers. *Rome Haul* (1929), *Erie Waters* (1933), and *The Wedding Journey* (1947) by Walter Edmonds are among the best; *Lock Her Through* (1940) by Eric Berry, pseudonym of Allena Best, has slightly more to do with Rochester.

Fictional accounts of the area's numerous *isms* have a perennial interest. Jane Marsh Parker was the first to make use of this material in her Millerite stories, notably *The Midnight Cry* (1886). Constance Robertson, *Fire Bell in the Night* (1944), recaptures the excitement of the underground railroad; unfortunately the station was Syracuse, not Rochester. Vardis Fisher's *Children of God* (1939) takes the Mormons westward on their epic trek. The leaders of these movements have likewise been treated in fictionalized biographies. Mrs. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (1945), presents a very readable account of Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet; Shirley Graham, *There Was Once a Slave* (1947), and Edmund Fuller, *A Star Pointed North* (1946), retell with artistry and, in the latter case, with great freedom, the life of Frederick Douglass, Rochester's great Negro editor and statesman. Mrs. Marian B. Pond's *Time is Kind* (1947), commemorates the birth of Spiritualism a century ago with a fictionalized biography of the Fox sisters. *Law of the Land* (1948), by Marguerite Allis, brings its heroine to Rochester at one point (pp. 247-261) to attend the first Woman's Rights Convention, which likewise occurred just a century ago. None of these books quite equals the

historic insight and dramatic skill manifested by Chard Powers Smith in *Artillery of Time* (1939) and *Ladies Day* (1941), both set in Watertown. Rochester readers will, however, be interested to know that it was a local regiment, the 140th, which performed the heroic action at Gettysburg so graphically described in Smith's first book.

But of all the regional-history novels, the only one which gives a clear picture of Rochester is *Their Wedding Journey* (1871) by William Dean Howells. Much of what this simple tale lacks in dramatic suspense is compensated for by descriptive detail, which is especially good in the chapter on Rochester as "The Enchanted City."

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Only a half-dozen books can properly be regarded as Rochester novels. The earliest of these, *Laurie Todd* by John Galt, an Englishman who apparently never visited the Genesee country, came out in 1830 and has long since been a collector's prize. Its quaint account of Laurie Todd's pioneer adventures on the site of present day Rochester will easily hold the attention of local readers, but they will have to seek the book in the Local History Division, for no copies are in circulation

Old, but by no means out of circulation, is Rossiter Johnson's *Phaeton Rogers* (1881). This fine boy's book recaptures much of the venturesome spontaneity of lads in their teens during Johnson's own youth in Rochester just prior to the Civil War. Phaeton Rogers had a special knack for inventions and was always devising some ingenious solution for practical difficulties of the day. His most notable triumph was the recovery of a kite which some of his prankish companions had attached to a church steeple one Saturday night following a sermon by the pastor against kite flying on Sunday. The book is still good reading for boys and has interest for local historians.

Equally skilled at the art of extricating himself from a tight spot was the hero of *The Good Die Poor* (1937), but there the analogy ends, for Henry Clune's cynical portrayal of political corruption in a city of Rochester's size and location during the early 1930's fails to recapture any of the community's pervasive atmosphere. Possibly the author was attempting to refute Carl Carmer's charge, issued the year before, that Rochester was too circumspect, prudent, discreet, sane and normal. More probably he was only trying his hand at light fiction and took occasion to work in some of the unsavory incidents and dissipated characters of his acquaintance that did not seem fit for press

release. The narrative progresses smoothly but fails to penetrate either the makeup of its characters or the crust of the city's life; apparently it did not arouse much local interest. It does not begin to compare with James M. Fitch's *The Ring Buster* (1940), a story of political corruption in the Buffalo of Grover Cleveland's day.

Henry Clune's second novel, *Monkey on a Stick* (1940), displays better character analysis and much narrative skill. Again it is set in a city of about Rochester's size but does not make any effort to interpret that community. The warm human flavor which characterizes many of Clune's "Seen and Heard" articles in the *Democrat & Chronicle* is strangely missing from his fiction. Perhaps some day he will find a story he can fuse into the local setting—a community which Clune knows so well that he will not be tempted to picture the minor characters and the public generally as ciphers or worse. Then perhaps we will have a Rochester novel, for Clune's narrative talents are genuine, whatever the shortcomings of these books, and they stand out strongly when compared with Elbert Angevine's *Short Skyrise* or with *The Copy Shop* (1925) by Edward Hungerford, whose forte was not fiction.

Rochester has produced an able writer of detective stories, Amber Dean (pseudonym of Mrs. Getzin), and local scenes provided the setting for one of her best books, *Foggy Foggy Dew* (1947). Rochester has not been noted for its murder mysteries (not, at least, since the mysterious disappearance of Emma Moore in 1855, a local tragedy reported in J. McMahon's *The Rochester Mystery* of 1855), but Amber Dean has given us a murder mystery most readers of such books will enjoy, with little thought, however, of the setting.

Paul Horgan's *The Fault of Angels* (1933) stirred much greater interest than any of the foregoing books, principally because it did prod beneath the surface. Some of the characters were drawn too closely from life to permit a display of the imaginative power required of a great novel, yet interesting aspects of Rochester's cultural life in the twenties are vividly set forth, and insight into the lives of a limited segment of the population is displayed. *The Fault of Angels*, whatever its imperfections, is the best novel yet written on Rochester.

However, it is in Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro* (1942), not strictly a novel, that we find the most sensitive fictional account of life in Rochester. Its subject, Rochester's Sicilian community, in which

Mangione grew to maturity, is treated with affectionate and sparkling humor, and while again some of the characters are drawn so directly from life as to offend some of the author's own people, yet in time this criticism will no doubt be transformed into gratitude. Meanwhile, we can only hope that writers with equal talents will arise among other distinctive folk groups in the city to transpose their native lore to the printed page before it is forgotten.

### Rochester Biographies

A skilled historical novelist can more successfully recreate the past than any historian or biographer, but unfortunately no such writer has yet discovered Rochester. In his absence, we will turn to the biographers and autobiographers who have been fairly numerous and, in a few cases, inspired. A careful check of the *Dictionary of American Biography* reveals that at least three score Rochesterians have received biographical treatment in that authoritative compilation. Not all of this number were born or educated here; nor are those simply born or educated in Rochester included in the sixty whose careers were in considerable part identified with this city. Perhaps a half-dozen others might well have been added to this national list, and local biographical compilations include several hundred brief sketches,\* but we will not attempt to compile a full list, for our object is simply to glance hastily along the biography shelf in order to select some good books for Rochester readers.

It is interesting to observe that more than a fifth of the Rochesterians about whom books have been written were women. Susan B. Anthony, Rochester's most famous citizen, heads the list, though none of the books on her life quite fills the need for a biography worthy of the great suffragist. The three volumes by Mrs. Ida A. Harper, *The Life and Works of Susan B. Anthony* (1898 and 1908), present a chronological account rich in detail but lacking in warmth, while Mrs. Rheta S. Dorr's *Susan B. Anthony—The Woman Who Changed the Mind of a Nation* (1928), though more popular is not penetrating. Fortunately, at least two experienced writers are now preparing new books on Miss Anthony and we hope soon to see the fruit of their work.

Rochester's two other most famous "daughters" (Lillian D. Wald and Emma Goldman) left the city before they had reached the age

\*The only reasonably selective edition of local biographies is that included in W. F. Peck's *Semi-Centennial History of Rochester* (1884), but see also: *Biographical Record of Rochester and Monroe County* (1902); *Rochester and Monroe County: Pictorial and Biographical* (1908); *Notable Men of Rochester and Vicinity* (1902); *Rochester in History* (1922).

at which Miss Anthony came to Rochester (25) and neither of them was born here, yet their books contain some interesting passages for local readers. *Lillian D. Wald: Neighbor and Crusader* (1938), by R. L. Duffus, stresses primarily her later career at Henry Street Settlement House in New York City, but the first twenty pages or so give an intimate picture of the family life of a young girl in the eighties. It is quite an ideological jump from Lillian Wald to her contemporary, Emma Goldman, as the latter's moving autobiography, *Living My Life* (1931), will reveal. Again, only the first few chapters (of the first volume in this case) relate directly to Rochester, and this time the environment described is by no means lovely, yet the writing is vivid and the picture honest, if not balanced.

Of course, no one of these three ladies—neither the suffragist, the social worker, nor the anarchist—properly represented Rochester, at least not as Carl Carmer described it. Much more in character were Jane Marsh Parker and Helen Barrett Montgomery; fortunately each has had her biographer. Mrs. Parker, a prolific writer herself of history, poetry and fiction, has contributed to our Rochester bookshelf as well as to the life of the city. We are indebted to the Rochester Historical Society (which she helped to found) for the publication in 1946 of *The Life and Work of Jane Marsh Parker*, by Marcelle LeMénager Lane. Mrs. Montgomery was even more forthrightly the spokesman of a later generation of Rochester women, women who were asserting and winning a place of influence in civic as well as cultural affairs. Only a memorial volume is available, printed in 1940, six years after her death, but fortunately it contains excerpts from her college journal and letters of later years which add much to its value.

There is work to be done here, for at least a half-dozen other Rochester ladies merit biographical treatment, notably Amy Post, Sister Hieronymo, Adelaide Crapsey and Mary T. Gannett. If we include regional personalities, many more women should be added, only a few of whom, Mrs. Stanton, Mrs. Bloomer, Mrs. Sanger, Miss Willard and of course Mary Jemison, have yet been favored with biographies.\*

\*The best of these are Alma Lutz, *Created Equal: A Biography of Elizabeth Cady Stanton* (1940), Dexter C. Bloomer, *Life and Writings of Amelia Bloomer* (1895), Margaret Sanger, *An Autobiography* (1938), Mary Earhart, *Frances Willard: From Prayers to Politics* (1944), and *A Narrative of the Life of Mary Jemison*, transcribed by James E. Seaver and published in numerous editions, many of them very rare.



The men have been more fortunate in this respect, for more of them have been commemorated in books. We will not attempt to list the numerous memorial booklets issued shortly after the death of worthy citizens, though a few of these were compiled with knowledge and understanding as well as feeling. Nor will we take note of all the ministers and professors who spent a few years in Rochester and ultimately concluded their peregrinations on the biography shelf. Despite these omissions, a full score of Rochester biographies remain, shedding light on all periods of the city's development. Some of them make very good reading.

For the pioneer period we share *Charles Williamson* by Miss Helen I. Cowan with the entire Genesee Country, of which he was the great promoter. This excellent volume, published by the Rochester Historical Society in 1941, treats the Scottish land agent (who left the area before Rochester was permanently established) more exhaustively than the city's own founders have yet been studied. Ebenezer Allan, pioneer settler and miller at the site of Rochester, has found a diligent biographer in Morley B. Turpin, whose able article, printed by the Rochester Historical Society (1932, Volume XI:313-338), is a foretaste of what we hope will be a full-length biography of this colorful if ill-starred pioneer. Colonel Nathaniel Rochester, our more dignified and more successful founder, has yet to find a biographer, though again the Rochester Historical Society has printed several good articles, including a genealogy of the Rochester family, (1924, Volume III:254-385).

Two important personalities whose brief years in Rochester were somewhat related and highly significant, Thurlow Weed and William Morgan, have inspired many writers. Weed, editor and politician, has been most ably treated by Professor Glyndon Van Deusen in his very readable biography, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby* (1947). Although earlier materials on this subject are now superseded, local readers will still find parts of Weed's own *Autobiography* (1883) worthy of attention. Weed's eight years in Rochester ended in 1830 and only the first portions of these books are local, but his activities involved many community interests. Perhaps no resident was more directly involved than William Morgan, the ill-fated martyr of Anti-Masonry, who had removed from Rochester shortly before the fatal

climax of his career. Some of the many philippic books and pamphlets which appeared in a veritable flood for a few years after Morgan's abduction and mysterious disappearance can be found in the Local History Division of the Public Library. The Rochester Historical Society has printed a summary account of the controversy (Volume VI:219-230) which is far superior to the recent, strongly biased volume by Thomas A. Knight, *The Strange Disappearance of William Morgan* (1932). The man himself merits fuller treatment.

Another Rochesterian of much more heroic stature, Frederick Douglass, has likewise inspired many books and pamphlets. The best by far, at least until recently, were his three autobiographical books, the last of which, *Life and Times of Frederick Douglass* (1882), contains much of local interest. Most of the later accounts were based largely on these valuable but by no means impartial records. Fortunately an excellent biography has now appeared which does full justice to this distinguished Negro statesman. *Frederick Douglass* (1948), by Benjamin Quarles, is not only a fine example of careful scholarship and clear writing but a contribution as well to social and political history—a worthy addition to the Rochester biography shelf.

Rochester has produced fewer political leaders of distinction (three more will be noted below) than preachers and educators, and many more books have been written on the latter. Several well-known men were both preachers and educators, notably Dr. Chester Dewey, Rochester's beloved Nestor of science, who still awaits a biographer though numerous articles are available, as well as Martin B. Anderson's tribute in his *Sketch of the Life of Chester Dewey* (1868). Professor A. C. Kendrick commemorated the university's first president in *Martin B. Anderson, LL.D., A Biography* (1895), while the Greek scholar's daughter, Mrs. Florence Kendrick Cooper, did the same for her father in *An American Scholar: A Tribute to Asabel Clark Kendrick* (1913). These books, compiled in a spirit of devoted appreciation, lack the detachment and the salty flavor that characterize a good biography; nevertheless they contain much valuable information about these men and the city. E. H. Johnson's *Ezekiel G. Robinson* (1896) is another such volume, enhanced, however, by the inclusion of an autobiographical section prepared in his last years by the distinguished president of Brown University, formerly the head of the Rochester Theological Seminary. The chapters on Rochester are well worth reading.

Professor F. J. Zwierlein's three-volume *Life and Letters of Bishop McQuaid* (1925-1927) is more than a biography of Rochester's first Catholic bishop, for it contains voluminous sections on the local history of Catholicism as well. The product of an able and diligent scholar, these volumes will long interest historians and readers of church history. Walter Rauschenbusch, the Protestant prophet of the social gospel and for many years a professor in Rochester, has likewise inspired several volumes. His colleagues at the Rochester Theological Seminary filled the 1913 issue of their *Bulletin* with tributes to his work; Vernon P. Bodein has offered an interpretation of his teachings in *The Social Gospel of Walter Rauschenbusch and Its Relation to Religious Education* (1944); the most complete biographical account is that of Dores R. Sharpe, *Walter Rauschenbusch* (1942). Much less famous or significant in a national sense than Walter Rauschenbusch, Rush Rhees was nevertheless more influential locally and as third president of the university directed its affairs during a period of rapid expansion. Professor John R. Slater's recent biography, *Rhees of Rochester* (1946), is by all odds the best in this group and we recommend it highly.

Rochester has become in recent years a center of scientific research, though not in the fields of its earliest and perhaps its greatest triumphs. Lewis H. Morgan, Father of American Anthropology, has been widely studied in biographical articles. Several of these were collected and published by the Rochester Historical Society (1923, Volume II:1-97), which has likewise printed (1937, Volume XVI:220-389) Morgan's very interesting *European Journal*, edited by Leslie A. White. Bernard J. Stern's *Lewis H. Morgan: Social Evolutionist* (1931) is a provocative analysis but leaves much to be desired. Fortunately, two able scholars are busily poring over the records of this greatest of Rochester's learned men, and we will await their books with interest. Less original as a thinker but insatiable in his quest for the artifacts of the natural sciences was Morgan's younger contemporary, Henry A. Ward. This colorful personality, most widely traveled of all Rochesterians, has found a biographer in his grandson, Roswell Ward. His book, *Henry A. Ward: Museum Builder to America*, published this past summer by the Rochester Historical Society, will delight any reader who takes an interest in science or adventure or in the Rochester scene of fifty to a hundred years ago.

Two Georges dominated much of the life of Rochester around the turn of the century and both have attracted biographers. George Eastman, the industrialist, outgrew his period of absorption in business and became a great philanthropist and patron of the arts. His records were carefully preserved and, toward the end of his career, a competent writer, Carl W. Ackerman, was called in to prepare a biography. The result, *George Eastman* (1930), is an informative book which reads easily and answers most questions except those inspired by curiosity as to Eastman's baffling character. But if the "Kodak King" did not lend himself to dramatic portrayal, that could not be said of his contemporary, George Aldridge, Republican boss of Rochester for several decades. Aldridge, however, was likewise reticent and seldom welcomed public attention; moreover, his papers were not so carefully preserved and when his biographer, Clement G. Lanni, undertook to reconstruct the Aldridge story, memory and tradition were his chief resources. Lanni has written three books on Aldridge of which *Beat 'Em or Join 'Em* (1931) is the best; readers who like the gusto of political struggles, as only a participant can recapture it, will enjoy at least a portion of these books.

Less colorful but more informative, Samuel T. Williamson's *Imprint of a Publisher* (1948) gives a dispassionate and newsy account of the remarkable career of Frank E. Gannett—the only living Rochesterian yet honored in this manner.

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Informed local readers will note several unfortunate gaps in our biographical shelf. As we have already indicated, fresh studies are now in preparation on some of the personalities mentioned, and new books will come in time on Colonel Rochester, Dr. Dewey and the two Georges. But where are the biographies of Hiram Sibley, George B. Selden, John Jacob Bausch, Daniel W. Powers, Freeman Clarke, Edward Mott Moore and several others? They are, unfortunately, unwritten, with the details and incidents scattered in small packets of letters, thumbworn diaries, account books, still preserved, we hope, in the safes and trunks of their descendants. Seldom is a good biography written without access to family papers, as a glance through the above list of Rochester biographies will demonstrate. A few of these writers have enjoyed the additional advantages of an unprinted or long-antiquated autobiography on which to construct, with the aid of letters and other sources, a more complete account.

Occasionally an autobiography completely fills the need, at least for a generation or so. Rochester has produced a few of these and some rank among its most readable books. The autobiographies of Thurlow Weed, Frederick Douglass and Emma Goldman have already been mentioned. A curious book, widely read in its day but long since forgotten, *The Autobiography of Joseph F. Hess, the Converted Prize-Fighter* (1888) will interest social historians and amuse readers in Rochester where Hess took the pledge. A more significant socio-economic picture of conditions in Rochester is presented by Margaret and Stuart Chase, *Honeymoon Experiment* (1916), in which their summer's quest for jobs in the Rochester of 1914 is vividly recalled.

Two very fine autobiographies rival in interest any books available on Rochester. The first, by Algernon S. Crapsey, *The Last of the Heretics* (1924), is written with humor and philosophic purpose. It engenders a keen human interest in the author's career, sufficient to carry the reader through dramatic theological struggles; moreover, it offers a truly intellectual experience and at the same time retells with graphic power an important chapter in Rochester's history. A friend and neighbor of Crapsey, Claude Bragdon has also written a good book, *More Lives Than One* (1938). Bragdon's experiments in architecture, in music and drama, and in the field of mystical religion were anything but local and provincial, yet a major portion of this biography recounts the birth of each of these interests during the author's years in Rochester. Few will follow Bragdon in all of his surprising lives, but they will not consider the hours spent on this book as wasted.

Much local history can best be told as a biography and we have accordingly devoted a number of the issues of *Rochester History* to this field. Several important personalities have been treated: Seth Green, the father of fish culture, Henry O'Reilly, editor and telegraph pioneer, Lewis Swift, the astronomer, and of course, Susan B. Anthony. Others will be studied from time to time, but our space is limited and some of the more important figures merit the attention of a full biography—a hint to descendants with papers in their attics and to writers endowed with human understanding.

## The History Books

In the number of books (other than fiction) available on local history, Rochester can rival most American cities, certainly all of its own size and age. Special anniversaries, the loyalties of numerous churches and similar organizations, and many other factors have inspired the writing of books, pamphlets and articles on almost every aspect of the city's history. Although some large gaps in the record remain, and while the task of integrating the various strands of development into one continuous story has only recently been undertaken, a number of useful and readable books and pamphlets can be recommended.

Most of the general histories of the city will seem antiquated and dull to the average reader unless he is looking for some special information. That is certainly true of the several large volumes brought out by William F. Peck, the best of which is his *Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester* (1884). Another heavy tome, *The History of Monroe County* (1877), compiled by W. H. McIntosh, is even more pedestrian, yet each of these books contains interesting information. Mrs. Parker's *Rochester, A Story Historical* (1884) is much more sprightly. Readers who look into Henry O'Reilly's *Sketches of Rochester* (1837), a pioneer study in both frontier and urban history, will be attracted by its quaint as well as its historic qualities, but they may be baffled by its organization, as they will be by that of Orsamus Turner's *Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* (1851).\*

Each of these volumes represented a cooperative effort to bring the community's history into convenient focus. Each achieved its purpose, at least in a measure, but only for its generation. In more recent years the desire for an integrated account of the city's history has again been felt. City Historian Edward R. Foreman saw the need two decades ago and laid plans for a four-volume *Centennial History of Rochester*. Unfortunately, many of the projected articles were never written and the others came in at such irregular intervals that it was impossible to coordinate and present them as originally planned. Yet the four volumes did appear (1931-1934) as part of the Rochester Historical Society's regular series of annual publications and contain much excellent reading.

\*A fuller account of the writings of these and other history books of the period may be found in my "History of Historical Writing in the Rochester Area," which came out in *Rochester History*, April, 1944.

When the present writer joined the City Historian's staff twelve years ago, the preparation of a comprehensive history of the city became his primary function. A first volume has already appeared, *Rochester the Water-Power City: 1812-1854* (1945), and a second, *Rochester the Flower City: 1855-1890*, is now in the hands of the publisher. Perhaps I should note here an amusing criticism that has reached my ears concerning the first of these volumes. It came from a man who bought the book expecting to read a detailed account of local water-power developments. He was, of course, disappointed, for the title was only supposed to symbolize the principal character of the city—its growth as a mill town and canal port, prospering through the development of its water resources. Now, in order that no one may be misled into supposing that the second volume depicts life in Rochester as a bed of roses, I have added a sub-title: "*A Story of Its Cosmopolitan Rebirth in an Age of Enterprise.*" Readers will find that these books not only strive to present a unified account of Rochester's development but also undertake to relate the city's growth to the general course of American history. Numerous illustrations and, in the second volume, a few charts may help the general reader to visualize the story.

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Of course most of the books on our Rochester history shelf have a more special or restricted purpose. Journalistic appraisals, nostalgic reminiscences, industrial and institutional histories, a city guide, are all available, ready to answer the questions and stir the curiosity of inquisitive citizens, and sometimes to please discriminating readers.

Charles Mulford Robinson was less famed as a newspaperman than as an architect and city planner but his little volumes on Rochester may perhaps be grouped with the journalistic commentaries. However, if it is somewhat difficult to classify his delightful booklets, it is certainly not hard to read them. The first, *Third Ward Traits* (1899), and the last, *Third Ward Catechism* (1908), both deal with Rochester's old ruffled shirt ward and have long since become collectors' items. *Rochester Ways* (1900) is equally rare and equally delightful. Indeed, the charming style and gentle irony of these essays will recompense any sensitive reader for his trouble in making the necessary trip to the Local History Division, since no copies are in circulation.

Perhaps a new edition of some of the choice writings on Rochester will one day be in order. Meanwhile we are glad to be able to recom-

mend to those who cannot get copies of Robinson's booklets a most pleasing article by Virginia Jeffrey Smith, "*Reminiscences of the Third Ward*," which appeared in the April, 1946, issue of *Rochester History*.

Joseph O'Connor, an older contemporary of Robinson and perhaps Rochester's most famous journalist, wrote a daily column around the turn of the century for the *Post Express*. Many of these columns, called "*The Rochesterian*," have been assembled in a series of scrapbooks to be found in the Local History Division, and a two-volume edition of O'Connor's writings was brought out a few years after his death. Much of the first volume of *The Rochesterian* (1911) deals with the city and makes interesting reading, though O'Connor's rather romantic temperament and florid style seem a bit anachronistic today.

Henry Clune's *Main Street Beat* (1947) certainly bears no such marks though it is much less acrid in tone than his novels. A journalist's account of the more colorful phases of his career, spent largely in Rochester, *Main Street Beat* successfully refutes Carmer's charge that the city lacks vivid and striking personalities.

Clune's *Main Street* is, however, only a sideshow in Rochester's long and slow-moving parade, as Arch Merrill's *Rochester Sketchbook* (1946) demonstrates. Here again the unusual incident or detail is highlighted and given perhaps more significance than it merits; yet we must recognize, as Merrill frequently emphasizes, that the journalist's art, like that of the novelist, is distinct from that of the historian. The journalist's data at its best is symbolic and evocative; the historian's, representative and instructive. At any rate, Arch Merrill's brief volumes (he has written five others on the historic lore of the region about Rochester\*) have won and pleased more local readers than any of the other books on the city and we are glad to include them on our bookshelf.

Arch Merrill's books, which appeared first as serials in the Sunday edition of the *Democrat & Chronicle*, are especially popular among oldsters whose thoughts have begun to turn backward with nostalgia. The Rochester Historical Society has published many articles of this sort, several of them in a special group of reminiscences of Rochester in the nineties (1942, Volume XX:1-140). Mrs. Katherine Rochester Montgomery Osgood's *Backward Glances at Old Rochester* (1937) is another good example of this approach.

\**A River Ramble* (1943), *The Lakes Country* (1944), *The Ridge* (1944), *The Towpath* (1945) and *Stagecoach Towns* (1947).



The youngsters have not been wholly forgotten, however. M. Frances Logan's *Stories of Rochester* (1921) answered the need for a time and can still be read with interest. My own little book for the Fourth Grade, *A Story of Rochester* (1938), has no doubt been thumbed more frequently than all of my other publications combined. I sincerely hope that the ten-year olds who have labored over it in their classrooms have experienced some of the pleasure I enjoyed in its writing.

Young and old alike, natives and visitors, have profited, and still more could benefit, by consulting the WPA *Guide to Rochester and Monroe County* (1937). This profusely illustrated book not only contains much historical and statistical information about the city but also locates most points of interest within its borders and outlines a number of agreeable tours into the hinterland. It has a sure place on any Rochester bookshelf.

Church folk will find a fairly large selection of books to their liking. The three-volume biography of *Bishop McQuaid* has already been mentioned as the best source on local Catholic history in the nineteenth century. The lengthy article by the Reverend Orlo J. Price, "One Hundred Years of Protestantism in Rochester," published by the Rochester Historical Society (1933, Volume XII:241-393), supplies an excellent survey of local Protestantism in readable form. Good articles on specific sects include Adelbert Cronise's "The Beginnings of Modern Spiritualism in and Near Rochester," also published by the Society (1926, Volume V:1-22).

Several fine books deal with individual churches. Perhaps the best from a literary point of view is Charles M. Robinson's *First Church Chronicles: 1815-1915* (1915), but Henry Anstice's *Centennial Annals of St. Luke's Church* (1917), expanding an earlier account by the same writer, is good, as are Jane Marsh Parker, *Christ Church* (1905), G. B. F. Hallock, etc., *A Living Church: The First Hundred Years of Brick Church* (1925), and W. E. Hastings, *A Century with Central Church* (1936). Most of the other churches have likewise issued memorial histories, generally in pamphlet form. Two especially deserve note: *The Souvenir Book of the Golden Jubilee of the Most Holy Redeemer Church* (1917), and Reverend Thomas W. Mullaney's *Four Score Years: A Contribution to the History of the Catholic Germans of Rochester* (1916). Some very interesting details concerning the

rituals and customs of this important segment of Rochester's population are more fully set forth here than in other printed sources.

Good reading on the ethnic groups out of which the Rochester population has grown is not so plentiful. The volumes just mentioned are, with Jerre Mangione's *Mount Allegro*, noted above, among the best. Norman T. Lyon has written an interesting *History of the Polish People in Rochester* (1935); Hermann Pfaefflin has performed that service for the Rochester Germans, though few of us will have the linguistic skill to read his *Hundertjahrige Geschichte der Deutschums von Rochester* (1915). Several special articles on nationality groups have been published by the Rochester Historical Society, notably "The History of the Italians of Rochester," by Clement G. Lanni (1927, Volume VI:183-199). Much still remains to be done here and the need is steadily becoming more urgent since the older immigrants and even the first generation of their American-born children are rapidly passing from the scene.

Only a few of our leading institutions have as yet been adequately studied by historians. The university has of course inspired frequent retrospective articles and addresses, and a detailed history by Jesse L. Rosenberger, *Rochester, the Making of a University* (1927), is available, though it does not compare with the several fine college histories which have recently appeared, notably that of Oberlin which has some special interest for Rochesterians. It is to be hoped that the approaching centennial will see this shortcoming corrected. The Rochester Theological Seminary, now the Colgate-Rochester Divinity School, will have a similar opportunity to supplement or supplant the accounts incorporated in the 75th Anniversary Volume (1925) of the Seminary's *Bulletin*. More adequate to their subjects are George W. Hoke's *Blazing New Trails* (1937), a history of Mechanics Institute, and Miss Virginia Jeffrey Smith's *A Century of Service: Rochester General Hospital* (1947).

The histories of Rochester industries are even more meager. Numerous promotional brochures or anniversary booklets are available, but no local industry has been thoroughly studied from the historical point of view. Ackerman's volume on *George Eastman* naturally gives much attention to the firm's history and is the best on the subject. Maude Motley's "The Romance of Milling: With Rochester the Flour City," published by the Rochester Historical Society (1931, Volume X:141-234), and my article, "The Flower City: Center of Nurseries

and Fruit Orchards" (1940, Volume XVIII:121-169), are the only comprehensive accounts available on these important industries.

Three significant studies of the nation-wide development of industries of major importance in Rochester deserve attention. C. B. Kuhlmann's *Development of the Flour Milling Industry in the United States* (1929) ably covers a wide field, but not so exhaustively as Robert Taft's *Photography and the American Scene [to 1889]* (1938). The scholarly and well-written volume of Robert S. Thompson, *Wiring a Continent* (1947), devotes still more space to Rochester. The city's large contributions in each of these fields is fully recognized in these important books.

No books of comparable scope have yet appeared on clothing, shoes, instruments, or any of Rochester's other important industrial specialties. However, a contemporary study by Boutelle E. Lowe, *Representative Industry and Trade Unionism of an American City* (1912), has now acquired historic interest, while the annual reports of the Chamber of Commerce (1889—), some of them many pages in length, are not to be overlooked. A special centennial publication by the Chamber, *One Hundred Years: A Century of Commerce in Rochester* (1934), contains many interesting historic pictures and data on the principal firms. Several years ago, before my own researches had progressed very far, I boldly undertook to compress the whole story of Rochester's economic development into twenty-four brief pages. I could not do it now, but curious readers may still consult *Rochester History*, October, 1941, for a summary account of the "Economic Stages in the Growth of Rochester."

The civic affairs of Rochester have seldom been dramatic enough to attract writers. William F. Peck endeavored to enliven his *History of the Police Department of Rochester* (1903) by including an account of most of the more sensational crimes, but he had not mastered the art of the detective story nor of the crime reporter. An excellent *Municipal Manual of Rochester*, brought out by Alderman George W. Elliott in 1887, was packed with statistical and descriptive detail now of great historical interest. Mr. Weller's studies of the charter's history have borne fruit in several articles published by the Rochester Historical Society, notably "The Expanding Charter Life of Rochester" (1933, Volume XII:61-94). A fine article by Isaac Adler, "The City Manager Movement in Rochester," also published by the Society (1939, Volume XVII:300-338), and Frederick C. Mosher's pamphlet, *City Manager Government in Rochester* (1940), both add much to our knowledge.

My own articles in this field include "Civic Developments of Rochester's First Half Century: 1817-1867" and "Turbulent but Constructive Decades in Civic Affairs: 1867-1900." I should mention also "A History of City Planning in Rochester" and "Historical Origins of Rochester's Social Welfare Agencies." All have appeared in earlier issues of *Rochester History*.

Several history books of broader regional scope have incidentally a definite local interest. Noble E. Whitford's two-volume *History of the Canal System of the State of New York* (1906) and Edward Hungerford's less statistically rich but much more readable *Men of Iron: The History of New York Central* (1938) and *Men of Erie* (1946) supply interesting information on the transport facilities of the area with some special references to Rochester. Carl F. Schmidt's *Cobblestone Architecture* (1944) and *Greek Revival Architecture in the Rochester Area* (1946), both richly illustrated, make a strong appeal to local readers, but Walter H. Cassebeer's "Architecture in Rochester," published by the Rochester Historical Society (1932, Volume XI:261-298), is a more comprehensive treatment of the subject.

In like fashion Rochesterians will find much of interest in the numerous writings on the Indian antiquities of this region. The literature on this subject is so voluminous that we will mention only Arthur C. Parker's "The First Human Occupation of the Rochester Region," published by the Rochester Historical Society (1931, Volume X:19-48), which contains a selected bibliography; William A. Ritchie's *The Pre-Iroquoian Occupation of New York State* (1943), the best recent publication in this field, and Lewis H. Morgan's early classic *League of the Iroquois* (1851). The Rochester Historical Society volumes contain several other excellent articles on the Indian backgrounds, and several on the French in this area, notably those of Alexander M. Stewart, whose fullest account, "Early Catholic History in the Rochester Diocese," appeared in a special supplement of the *Catholic Courier*, October 25, 1934. The abundant literature on the geology of the Genesee Country is best summarized in Herman LeRoy Fairchild's "Physical Causes of Rochester's Prosperity," published by the Rochester Historical Society (1931, Volume X:83-104).

For suitable materials on the social and cultural aspects of Rochester's history, the reader will have to turn to a number of articles, several of which are fortunately quite good. The Rochester Historical Society published a collection of such articles on the libraries of Rochester in

1937 (Volume XVI:1-216) and brought out a similar series on schools a year later (Volume XVII:1-267). Other good articles in this general field, published by the Historical Society, include R. H. Lansing's "Music in Rochester from 1817 to 1890" (Volume II:135-189), S. B. Sabin's "Music in Rochester from 1909 to 1924" (Volume III:1-36), George M. Elwood's delightful "Early Public Amusements" (Volume I:17-52), and "Panorama of Social Rochester" (Volume XII:11-52) by Amy H. Coughton, who has contributed other good articles as well. We have endeavored to fill some of the gaps in this field with articles in *Rochester History*. One of the best is Natalie F. Hawley's "Literature in Rochester: 1865-1905," while my own "Rochester Learns to Play: 1850-1900" will interest sports fans.

Rochester's wartime experiences have been variously covered. City Historian Edward R. Foreman's three-volume *World War [I] Service Records* (1924, 1928, 1930) covers Rochester's part in that great struggle most thoroughly. An excellent account by Ruth Marsh of Rochester's Civil War experiences was published by the Rochester Historical Society in its 1944 volume, the rest of which is composed of selected excerpts from letters and diaries written by Rochester boys on the battlefields. A similar collection of service letters of the Second World War was published recently in *Rochester History*. We have also issued "War on Lake Ontario: 1812-1815" by Ruth Marsh and Dorothy S. Truesdale, and my account of "Rochester's First Year in the War for Survival."

But it is time to conclude this rambling survey of readings on Rochester. Possibly we have already mentioned too many titles, over a hundred books and as many more articles, but no local reader will want to overlook two last volumes. Both were issued by the Rochester Historical Society: a collection of "Letters Postmarked Rochester," which started with a few of 1817 and followed through consecutively to 1879 (1943, Volume XXI:1-165), and a collection of the comments on Rochester made by foreign visitors prior to 1840 (1940, Volume XVIII:1-120). It may not always be agreeable, but it is instructive and often-times amusing to see ourselves as others see us. That of course is what we are unconsciously seeking to do when we dip into a book on our community. We close with the hope that local readers will be encouraged to explore the Rochester bookshelf at first hand.

## A "Five Foot Shelf" of *Books on Rochester*

### FICTION AND FOLKLORE

- Carl Carmer, *Listen for a Lonesome Drum* (1936)  
Henry Clune, *Main Street Beat* (1947)  
Amber Dean, *Foggy Foggy Dew* (1947)  
Edmund Fuller, *A Star Pointed North* (1946)  
John Galt, *Laurie Todd* (1830)  
Paul Horgan, *The Fault of Angels* (1933)  
William Dean Howells, *Their Wedding Journey* (1871)  
Rossiter Johnson, *Phaeton Rogers* (1881)  
Jerre Mangione, *Mount Allegro* (1942)

### BIOGRAPHY AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- Carl W. Ackerman, *George Eastman* (1930)  
Claude Bragdon, *More Lives Than One* (1938)  
Stuart Chase, *Honeymoon Experiment* (1916)  
Helen I. Cowan, *Charles Williamson* (1941)  
Algernon S. Crapsey, *The Last of the Heretics* (1924)  
Ida H. Harper, *The Life and Works of Susan B. Anthony* (1898, 1908)  
Marcelle Le M nager Lane, *Life and Work of Jane Marsh Parker* (1946)  
Clement G. Lanni, *Beat 'Em or Join 'Em* (1931)  
Benjamin Quarles, *Frederick Douglass* (1948)  
Dores R. Sharpe, *Walter Rauschenbusch* (1942)  
John R. Slater, *Rhees of Rochester* (1946)  
Bernard J. Stern, *Lewis H. Morgan: Social Evolutionist* (1931)

- Glyndon Van Deusen, *Thurlow Weed: Wizard of the Lobby* (1947)  
 Roswell Ward, *Henry A. Ward: Museum Builder to America* (1948)  
 Samuel T. Williamson, *Imprint of a Publisher* (Frank Gannett) (1948)  
 F. J. Zwierlein, *Life and Letters of Bishop McQuaid* (1925, 1927)

#### HISTORY BOOKS

- George W. Hoke, *Blazing New Trails* (1937)  
 Norman T. Lyon, *History of the Polish People in Rochester* (1935)  
 Blake McKelvey, *A Story of Rochester* (1938)  
 Blake McKelvey, *Rochester, The Water Power City: 1812-1854* (1945)  
 Arch Merrill, *Rochester Sketchbook* (1946)  
 Katherine R. M. Osgood, *Backward Glances at Old Rochester* (1937)  
 Henry O'Reilly, *Sketches of Rochester* (1837)  
 Jane Marsh Parker, *Rochester, A Story Historical* (1884)  
 William F. Peck, *Semi-Centennial History of the City of Rochester* (1884)  
 Charles M. Robinson, *Third Ward Traits* (1899)  
 Charles M. Robinson, *Rochester Ways* (1900)  
 Jesse L. Rosenberger, *Rochester, the Making of a University* (1927)  
 Carl F. Schmidt, *Greek Revival Architecture in the Rochester Area* (1946)  
 Virginia J. Smith, *A Century of Service: Rochester General Hospital* (1947)  
 Robert S. Thompson, *Wiring a Continent* (1947)  
 WPA *Guide to Rochester and Monroe County* (1937)

## HISTORICAL PUBLICATIONS

### The Rochester Historical Society *Publications*, I-XXIV

These books, which have appeared almost annually since the start of the series in 1922, contain many fine articles, some of which have been specifically mentioned above. The four-volume *Centennial History of Rochester, New York* is included as Volumes X-XIII in the larger series. Volume XV is a comprehensive index of the materials in the earlier books and greatly facilitates their use for reference purposes. A few of the later volumes have been devoted to one subject, as in the case of the Williamson and the Ward biographies, the books concentrating on libraries, schools, and travel journals, all of which have been listed above.

These publications are available for reference or circulation at all libraries in the city. Individual books may be ordered from the Historical Society.

### ROCHESTER HISTORY, I-X

#### *Rochester History*, I-X

Reference copies of the successive issues of this quarterly publication of the Rochester Public Library have been bound and may be consulted at the library. One set is available for circulation. Copies of back numbers still in stock may be secured at the City Historian's office.



